Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 09779 222134Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 HA-05 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/087 W
----------128660 230305Z /41
R 222037Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3859

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 9779

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: MASSERA PUBLICLY ANSWERS VIDELA ON
THE "FOURTH MAN" ISSUE

REF: BUENOS AIRES 9753

1. ADMIRAL MASSERA HAS CHOSEN TO RESPOND TO PRESIDENT VIDELA'S SCENARIO FOR REORGANIZING THE JUNTA AND ESTABLISHING A FOURTH MAN POSITION (REFTEL) IN A WAY WHICH DRAGS THEIR DIFFERENCES OUT INTO FULL PUBLIC VIEW AND WHICH LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE IS CHALLENGING THE LEGITIMACY OF VIDELA'S POSITION ON THESE ISSUES. MASSERA ISSUED HIS STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION IN THE SAME WAY AS VIDELA -- DURING THE COURSE OF A YEAR'S END DRINK WITH REPORTERS -- AND ADDED INSULT TO INJURY BY TIMING HIS REMARKS SO THAT THEY APPEARED SIMULTANEOUSLY AND SHARED THE HEADLINES WITH VIDELA'S MAJOR SPEECH ON DECEMBER 20 DEALING WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S "POLITICAL PROPOSAL" FOR THE FUTURE (SEPTEL).

2. MASSERA STATED THAT IT WAS INCORRECT, AS SOME HAD DONE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 09779 222134Z

(READ VIDELA), TO SPEAK OF A SUPPOSED NEED TO DEFINE THE POWER STRUCTURE AT THE UPPER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. THE FOUNDING STATUTE AND ACCOMPANYING REGULATIONS OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS, WHICH WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE ARMED FORCES AT THE OUTSET OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, CLEARLY SPELLED OUT THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT SIMULTANEOUSLY BE THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIF OF ONE OF THRE THREE SERVICES. BECAUSE OF

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS RULE WAS AMENDED TO PERMIT THE ARMY COMMANDER TO EXERCISE THE PRESIDENCY AS A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT. CITING A RECENT STATEMENT BY AIR FORCE COMMANDER, BRIGADIER AGOSTI, AS SUPPORT, MASSERA SAID THAT THE AIR FORCE AND THE NAVY COINCIDED IN THE VIEW THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO WAIT UNTIL 1979 TO PROCEED WITH THE ORIGINAL GOVERNMENT PLAN, I.E. THE FOURTH MAN SCHEME. IN FACT, CONTINUED MASSERA, THE NAVY'S VIEW WAS THAT THE SITUATION WAS RIGHT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME "WITHIN A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME."

3. THEN, IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A PARTICULARLY DEFIANT PASSAGE, MASSERA ADDRESSED HIMSELF DIRECTLY TO THE THREE PRECONDITIONS WHICH VIDELA REPORTEDLY CITED AS BEING NECESSARY BEFORE HE COULD STEP DOWN AS COMMANDER OF THE ARMY (PARAGRAPH 3, REFTEL). WITHOUT CONCEDING THAT THE THREE ISSUES IN QUESTION WERE LEGITIMATE REASONS FOR DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOURTH MAN SCHEME, MASSERA STATED THAT: (A) THERE WAS "UNANIMITY OF OPINION" THAT, IN TERMS OF ITS CAPABILITY OF OPERATING AS AN ORGANIZED FORCE, THE SUBVERSION HAD BEEN LIQUIDATED; (B) THE PLANNING PROCESS HAD PROGRESSED SUFFICIENTLY SO THAT THE GENERAL OUTLINES OF THE NATIONAL PLAN HAD ALREADY BEEN DRAWN AND FURTHER DETAILS WOULD BE RELEASED BY PLANNING MINISTER DIAZ BESSONE IN A CONFERENCE TO BE GIVEN DECEMBER 22; AND (C) THE "GRAY AREAS" EXISTING BETWEEN THE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE JUNTA AND THE PRESIDENCY HAD ALREADY BEEN GREATLY CLARIFIED AND WOULD BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 09779 222134Z

DELINEATED WHEN THE TWO ROLES WERE SEPARATED IN FACT, I.E. WHEN THE PRESIDENT GAVE UP HIS ROLE AS ARMY CHIEF. THUS, MEANT MASSERA, THERE WAS NO VALID REASON FOR WAITING ANY FURTHER IN SEPARATING THE TWO POSITIONS.

4. NOTING THAT THE FOUNDING STATUTES LEFT UP TO EACH SERVICE, AND NOT TO THE JUNTA, TO ESTABLISH THE RULES FOR DETERMINING THE RETIREMENT DATES OF THE THREE COMMANDERS, MASSERA STATED THAT THE NAVY HAD NOT YET MADE A DECISION IN ITS (HIS) OWN CASE. BUT THIS WAS NOT THE QUESTION WHICH THE JUNTA WAS SUPPOSED TO TREAT IN ITS DECEMBER 22 MEETING. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS SI PLY TO DECIDE WHEN THE ARMY'S COMMANDER'S ROLE WOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THAT OF THE PRESIDENCY.

5. COMMENT: BY "GOING PUBLIC" IN THE SENSE OF REVEALING AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THEM ON THE FOURTH MAN ISSUE, VIDELA AND MASSERA ARE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING THE EXISTENCE OF A DEEP AND APPARENTLY BITTER DIVISION WHICH COULD GROWN MORE SERIOUS IN THE COMING YEAR. A SOURCE IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY HAS TOLD US THERE WAS SUSPICION THAT MASSERA INTENDED TO LEAVE HIS JUNTA AND NAVY JOBS NEXT YEAR IN A BLAZE OF

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE VIDELA/MARTINEZ DE HOZ ECONOMIC AND LABOR POLICIES IN HOPES OF WINNING THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES AND LABOR UNIONS TO HIS BANNER. A FIELD GRADE ARMY OFFICER WITH SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL/LABOR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE ARMY COMMAND TOLD US THAT THE MASSERA PRONOUNCEMENTS REGARDING THE FOURTH MAN SCHEME WERE JUST THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF RECENT ACTIONS BY THE ADMIRAL WHICH THE ARMY REGARDED AS SERIOUS PROVOCATIONS. THE ARMY WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET, THE COLONEL SAID, BY A RECENT WASHINGTON DATELINED STORY REPORTING COHA DIRECTOR LARRY BIRNS' "PERNICIOUS" STATEMENT PRAISING THE ARGENTINE NAVY, UNDER MASSERA'S COMMAND, AS THE SERVICE MOST RECEPTIVE TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY.
ACCORDING TO THE VERSION APPEARING IN THE LOCAL PRESS,
CONFIDENTIAL

BIRNS, CITING UNIDENTIFIED U.S. GOVERNMENT SOURCES, SAID THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT THE NAVY HAD RECOMMENDED JACOBO TIMERMAN'S RELEASE. IN ANY INTERMILITARY DISPUTE IN ARGENTINA, BIRNS REPORTEDLY CONCLUDED, THE U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT THE ARGENTINE NAVY.
CASTRO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JUNTA, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT REFORM, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BUENOS09779
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770478-1058
Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771228/aaaaawxc.tel
Line Count: 142
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f61c49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BUENOS AIRES 9753
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 149319
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MASSERA PUBLICLY ANSWERS VIDELA ON THE \"FOURTH MAN\" ISSUE
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SHUM, AR, (MASSERA PADULA, EMILIO EDUARDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f61c49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009